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# Steens Mountain

# Summary

## Recreation Area Management Plan

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U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management



Burns District - Oregon

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IN REPLY  
REFER TO:

# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Burns District Office  
74 South Alvord, Burns, OR 97720

February 22, 1985

Dear Steens Mountain User:

The final Steens Mountain Recreation Management Plan has been completed and a copy of the management direction summary is enclosed for your use.

This document outlines the management direction the Bureau of Land Management will be taking in the coming years on public land in the Steens Mountain Recreation Lands.

These decisions are the result of many written and personal public comments, the District's Advisory Board Council input, and a public meeting held during the 45-day comment period on the draft document.

After a 30-day public review period from this publication date, the decisions outlined in this final document will be implemented. All comments should be sent to the Burns District Manager, BLM, 74 S. Alvord St., Burns, Oregon 97720 by March 29, 1985.

For more background information and a copy of the Steens Mountain Recreation Management Plan - Final, please contact this office at your convenience.

Thank you for your interest and support in BLM's Steens Mountain Recreation Lands.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua L. Warburton  
District Manager

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Denver, Colorado



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# Summary of the Steens Mountain Recreation Management Plan

Action	Management Direction
Wilderness Study Area	Continue interim management of the existing WSAs under mandates established by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1986 until Congress acts to create wilderness areas or release the areas from wilderness review. At that time wilderness management plans will be written for designated wilderness areas.
Areas of Critical	Develop and implement management plans to protect the Environmental Concern/ areas designated as ACECs or Research Natural Areas and continue to inventory for cultural, natural, scenic, wildlife and plant community or habitat types that need protection or are in good condition and need representation in the Oregon Natural Heritage Plan. For RNA management plans have been completed.
Special Recreation Use Permits	Require special recreation use permits for individuals and groups in those cases involving specific recreation, scientific study and education activities which affect the recreational use of the other visitors, or have an impact on the area's resource values, including competitive and commercial use of the public lands. Fees may or may not be charged depending on the Bureau's determination of commercial or competitive use. Determination will be made on a case-by-case basis with specific stipulations regulating use. Organized groups of 15 or more people that intend on camping more than a 4-day length of stay will be required to obtain a recreation use permit.
High Desert Trail Route/Other Trail Routes	Develop and manage the corridor route for the High Desert Trail and additional trails for a system to accomodate and enhance the primitive and backcountry recreation experience offered by the area.
Law Enforcement/ Search and Rescue/ Visitor Safety	Establish a cooperative law enforcement and search and rescue agreement with the Harney County Sheriff's Office to act as the agent to enforce regulations, provide visitor protection and act as a deterrent to vandalism and destruction of facilities and the natural resources. The agreement will outline the responsibilities of the two agencies and the amount and type of assistance the BLM can provide when requested by the Sheriff's Office.
Recreational Use Monitoring	Monitor the resource impacts of recreation use through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Periodic road and backcountry patrols by vehicle, foot or horse.</li><li>2. Continuation of locating traffic counters at strategic locations to record visitors entering and leaving the area and using specific sites.</li><li>3. Recordation of group numbers and the type of use.</li><li>4. Issuance of recreation use permits for commercial, competitive and specific recreational, scientific study and educational uses.</li><li>5. Periodic visitor use analysis as visitor numbers and/or recreation uses change from the present pattern.</li></ol>
Visitor Use Allocation System	The current use level does not yet warrant this.
Public Information/ Education Program	Develop an interpretative program for users which focuses on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Campsite locations and capacities.</li><li>2. Off-road vehicle use.</li><li>3. Visitor awareness of outstanding natural, scenic and cultural resources.</li><li>4. Environmentally acceptable visitor behavior which will protect cultural resources, wildlife habitat and populations, the natural character of the mountain and the enjoyment of the area by recreationists.</li></ol>



Facilities Operation and Maintenance	Operate and maintain the existing BLM recreation sites and rehabilitate substandard facilities identified during annual maintenance inspections as needing repair or replacement.
Present Development	
a. Jackman Park	<p>Upgrade the campground area at Jackman Park to provide group camping capability. Emphasize a primitive area primary for organized groups.</p> <p>Provide a water system that meets Federal and State water standards for potable water in a public camping area at Jackman Park.</p>
b. Page Springs	<p>Provide better definement of campsites at Page Springs and Jackman Park.</p> <p>Upgrade and maintain the nature trail at Page Springs including development of interpretive signing and/or a brochure to note plant types and other natural features.</p> <p>Maintain conditions at Page Springs to provide opportunities for the public to observe beaver, waterfowl, raptors and other wildlife that utilize the spring water, ponds, streams and cliffs within the area.</p>
Future Developments	<p>Develop a campground in the area of Blitzen Crossing.</p> <p>Develop campgrounds for groups using horses.</p> <p>Develop and manage sites at several locations for vehicular sightseeing opportunities.</p> <p>Overlooks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Kiger Gorge Overlook</li> <li>(2) High Steens Meadows Wayside</li> <li>(3) Little Blitzen Canyon Overlooks (2 sites)</li> <li>(4) East Rim Overlook</li> <li>(5) Big Indian Canyon Overlooks (2 sites)</li> <li>(6) Wild Horse Lake Overlook</li> <li>(7) Moraine Wayside</li> <li>(8) Big Juniper Wayside</li> <li>(9) Wild Horse Herd Wayside</li> </ol> <p>Develop parking areas or "pull-outs" at or near the points of observation where vehicular parking space is needed.</p> <p>Provide interpretive facilities at the identified interpretive sites where a description of the viewed features would assist visitors in orientation. This will be accomplished through a series of brochures.</p> <p>Develop Visitor Center/Administration Site near Develop Visitor Center/Administration Site near Frenchglen.</p>
Signs Program	Provide signing for essential services including traffic management, facility and recreation use management at specific locations on the mountain.
Upgrading of Existing Roads	Upgrade the Steens Mountain Loop road from Lily Lake to the East Rim including the road to Wild Horse Lake Overlook. This will be a high standard gravel road that will allow safe travel of passenger cars. It will also include the access roads into Kiger Gorge and the East Rim Overlooks.
Steens Mountain Loop Road Access	Keep the loop road open for vehicle travel during weather conditions when there would be no damage to the road, except a section of the South Loop from the summit to a point four miles east of Blitzen Crossing may be closed if upper Steen mountain is designated wilderness.



New Access Development (subalpine zone)	Develop no new roads to allow motorized vehicle use in the subalpine zone, or identified riparian zones.
Motorized Vehicle Use	Continue to manage vehicle use according to the off-road vehicle designation that was put in force in September, 1980. Changes, as necessary, will be made to protect the mountain environment.
Winter Sports Use	Allow winter sport activities on a trial basis. This use will be monitored to determine how and what type of activities will be permitted.
Controlled Livestock Grazing in Canyons and Upper Elevations	Work cooperatively with ranches to provide adequate protection of certain stream and other sensitive areas.
Recreation Use Conflicts	Establish visitor use requirements which will include appropriate measures to minimize recreation use conflicts and prohibit those uses which are injurious to the resource.
Land and Mineral Entry and Mining Claims	Impose tightest restrictions possible on surface disturbing activities on the upper elevations of Steens Mountain. The area is generally within the boundaries of the designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern, Research Natural Areas and Wilderness Study Areas. Mineral operations should be subject to the maximum stipulations possible under surface management regulations for locatable, leasable and salable minerals.
Monitor Bighorn Sheep Populations, Redband Trout Habitat and Deer Winter Range	Cooperate with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife monitoring wildlife values and sensitive species. Measure the effects which human activities have on these species.
Cultural Resource Protection	Protect important cultural sites, and where feasible, interpret for public information and education.
Land Base Adjustments Involving Private Adjustments	Acquire certain parcels of private land within the boundaries of the Steens Mountain Recreation Lands as they become available. Adjustments can be through land exchanges or by purchase, and will only be achieved by agreements with the landowners.
Land Base Adjustments Involving State Lands	Acquire certain parcels of State land within the boundaries of the Steens Mountain Recreation lands through ongoing State exchanges.
Negotiate Scenic Easements	Obtain agreements with private landowners to protect the natural and scenic values of the mountain. If necessary, acquire scenic easements to prevent incompatible use or development of private land.
Negotiate Access Easements	Negotiate recreational use agreements across private property where necessary to continue or enhance recreational use, particularly for the development of hiking and horseback trails.
Develop Management Programs	Coordinate the visitor and resource management program with Federal, State and local agencies and various private landowners.
U.S. Air Force	Work with the U.S. Air Force to mitigate the impacts of low-flying aircraft over and in the canyons, if feasible.



# STEENS MOUNTAIN VICINITY MAP









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